



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Public Art at South Ellerbe Restoration Project in Durham, NC

808 West Trinity Avenue Durham, NC 27701

In collaboration with the City of Durham's Public Works Department, the City of Durham's Cultural and Public Art Program (referred to as "City") is seeking an Artist or Artist Team (referred to as "Candidates") with experience in projects centered around environmental design and functional, sculptural and/or integrated artwork to design and fabricate public art installations at the South Ellerbe Restoration project located at 808 West Trinity Avenue in Durham.



Figure 1: Conceptual rendering of South Ellerbe Restoration project at 808 W Trinity Ave.

If you are interested in being a part of this project and contributing to the restoration and improvement of South Ellerbe Creek, submit requested all information and any questions to rebecca.brown@durhamnc.gov with "Public Art RFQ: South Ellerbe Restoration Project" in the subject line.

Candidates who have already registered with the City of Durham's [Pre-Qualified Artists Registry](#) **must** submit all requested RFQ materials as outlined below via email to rebecca.brown@durhamnc.gov to be considered for the South Ellerbe Restoration Public Art Project.

RFQ Deadline: Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The South Ellerbe Restoration site will be transformed into a constructed wetland and stream restoration that will filter polluted stormwater from nearby neighborhoods and part of downtown. This restoration project will benefit both the community and the environment by increasing green space, improving water quality, and improving aquatic life in South Ellerbe Creek and Falls Lake. A cleaner Falls Lake will help support its uses for drinking water supply, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation.

[Surface 678](#), a landscape architecture studio headquartered in Durham, NC, is providing amenity design, including the redesign of the Trinity Avenue streetscape, a plaza on the corner of Trinity Avenue and Duke Street with a stormwater demonstration bioretention garden, and interpretive educational signage about the wetland and stream restoration function and ecology. The site will also include a half-mile loop trail along the perimeter of the site that will connect to the existing South Ellerbe Creek Trail. Piedmont native wetland plants will be featured along the trail.

The goal of the public art component is to combine both education opportunities and public art amenities to highlight the importance of wetland environments.

The selected Candidate(s) will work to:

- Develop community-informed designs for public artwork that connects visually to South Ellerbe Creek or interpret historical, environmental, scientific, or cultural aspects of the site
- Beautify the greenspace through site-specific public art amenities and/or educational, interpretive public art elements along paths
- Provide hands-on educational opportunities for adults and children through artful installations
- Design, fabricate and install sculptural, functional artwork and/or incorporate public art that is integrated into the site.

Throughout the community engagement sessions, the public's ideas emphasized installing water- and nature-themed public art and interpretive signs along the trails and providing hands-on educational opportunities for adults and children. Topics for educational themes included the water cycle, stormwater, flooding, natural restoration processes, native plants, and wildlife habitat. Candidates can review information about the prior community engagements sessions related to public art in the Community Engagement section of the RFQ.

Ellerbe Creek Watershed Background

Ellerbe Creek has a rich history and includes some of the oldest development in the city – some even dating back to the 1800's. While historical areas are of great cultural value, they can be an issue for our water. Most of the land in this watershed was already developed when regulations and ordinances began requiring stormwater management. This means there are lots of buildings and roads that don't let rain water soak into the ground. Instead rain travels over those surfaces, picking up pollution as it goes, and hits our creeks and streams in a rush. This can cause problems with flooding and water pollution.

The Ellerbe Creek Watershed Improvement Plan was put together through the efforts of city staff and consultants (Brown and Caldwell), to expand an earlier plan developed by the city, Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association, and the North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program. A Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP) gathers detailed information about a water body and analyzes it to protect and improve water quality. More information about the plan is here: <https://durhamnc.gov/954/Ellerbe-Creek-Watershed-Improvement-Plan>.

This specific project is in the [Ellerbe Creek Watershed](#) which drains to Falls Lake. The restoration will help the City meet the Falls Lake Nutrient Strategy, which requires the City to reduce nutrients from both new building projects and from older parts of the city. While Durham's Stormwater Performance Standards for Development govern new building projects, parts of the city were built before those rules were in place. This restoration offers a unique chance to filter rain runoff in an urban area that was developed before the City's stormwater rules were in place.

The South Ellerbe Restoration project is being constructed in phases. Phase 1 involved the demolition of the building and was completed in 2018. Currently, the City is finalizing construction plans for the soil removal phase (Phase 2) that will involve removing and reusing some of the soil at other City project sites. Phase 2 construction is anticipated to begin in 2021. The design team is currently working on the final design for the wetland and stream restoration construction (Phase 3), which will take place after the soil removal phase. The public art component developed out of this RFQ will be incorporated into Phase 3 of construction.

Background Information on South Ellerbe Restoration Project can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/88K7JHMZp4>

Ellerbe Creek Watershed Background (continued)

The site of South Ellerbe Restoration project and historic photos (including the 'lyceum', YMCA, and Duke Diet and Fitness Center) can be found on Open Durham's webpage, here: <https://www.opendurham.org/buildings/trinity-avenue-ymca-duke-diet-center>.

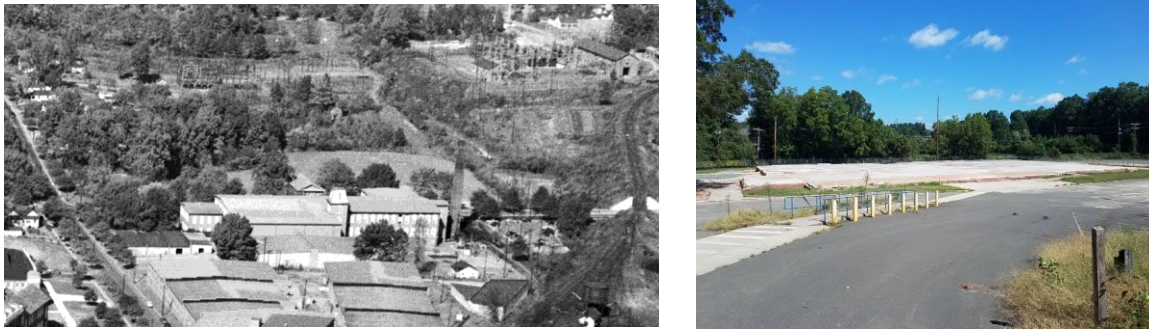


Figure 2 & 3: View of South Ellerbe Creek site (left: 1950-60s, right: after removal of Duke Diet and Fitness Center)

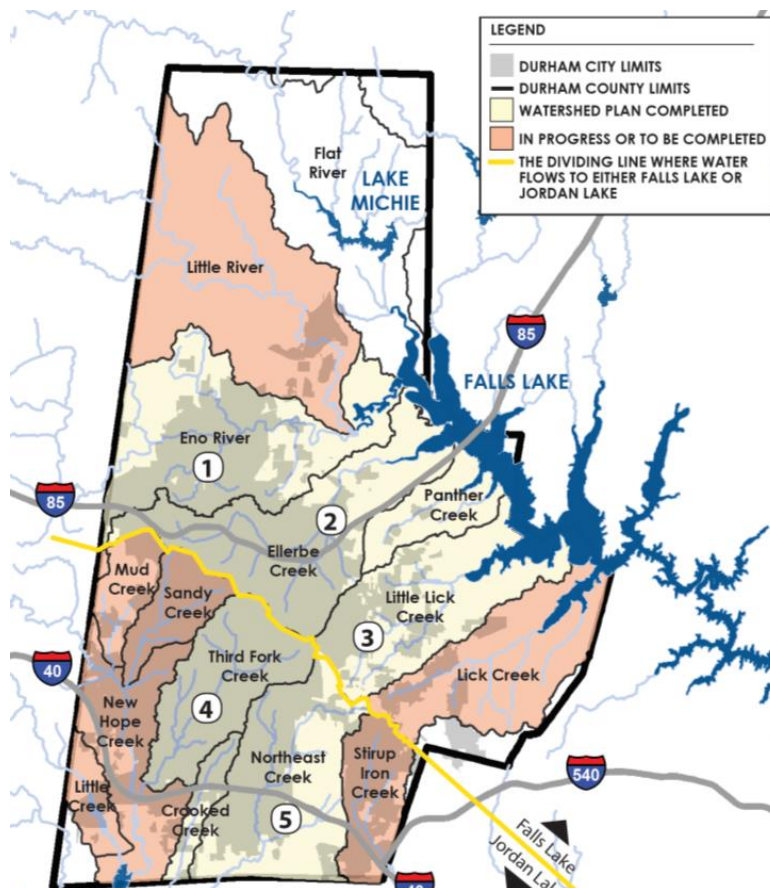


Figure 4: City of Durham watershed map, showing Ellerbe Creek Watershed (#2) in relation to Falls Lake (Source: <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/25818>)

Ellerbe Creek Watershed & Project Background (continued)

Resources

Project Information:

- South Ellerbe Restoration project website: <https://durhamnc.gov/1616>
- Project Status Report #1 (July 2017):
 - <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15960>
- Project Status Report #2 (April 2018):
 - <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20904>
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):
 - <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37303>
- Public Meetings Summary (January 2018):
 - <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19608>
 - Summary of input received on the South Ellerbe Restoration Project from the first two public information sessions held in 2017.
- Survey # 2 Summary (May 2018): <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22005>
 - Summary of the responses received from two public surveys distributed in an effort to gather input from residents about project goals and design elements.
- Education Opportunities & Public Art vision board used at Design Workshop (Public Information Session #2, September 27, 2017):
 - <http://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16918>
 - The goal of the workshop was to bring the community together with the designers to solicit input on the project design concept. The workshop was organized into four design stations where attendees could provide feedback: Trails, Boardwalks, Recreation & Overlooks; Natural Areas, Vegetation, and Wildlife Habitat; Educational Opportunities and Public Art; and A Watershed Perspective of the Project.
- Historic fire insurance map: <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16977>
 - Historic map shows the two streams coming together on the project site and surrounding area. It also depicts where the club house/lyceum building was located along Trinity Avenue.

Videos:

- South Ellerbe Project Video: <https://youtu.be/88K7JHMZzP4>
- Clean Water Habitat Fence Art: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slrSI58mLJc>
- Design Workshop Summary Video: <https://youtu.be/N4bcrZeT5hl>
- Wetlands Functions and Benefits Video: https://youtu.be/iK8rgCj_Nqg

External Webpage:

- Open Durham: <https://www.opendurham.org/buildings/trinity-avenue-ymca-duke-diet-center>
 - Link to historical information and photos of the South Ellerbe Restoration project site at 808 W. Trinity Ave and historic photos (including the 'lyceum', YMCA, and Duke Diet and Fitness Center).

City of Durham's Public Works Department Stormwater and GIS Services Division

The [Stormwater and GIS Services Division](#) with the City of Durham Public Works Department is guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#) goals of stewardship of the City's physical and environmental assets and innovative and high-performing organization. Activities include storm drainage design and plans review; inspecting and maintaining City-owned drainage systems; enforcing stormwater ordinances and regulations; education and outreach; stream monitoring, restoration, and watershed master planning; maintaining multiple layers of the City's geographic information; and stormwater billing. To learn more, follow on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

City of Durham's Cultural & Public Art Program

The Cultural and Public Art Program believes that Durham's rich cultural heritage is an important part of what makes Durham's neighborhoods thrive, attracts tourism and business development, and what brings the community closer together. The program seeks to bring public art into the everyday experience of Durham residents through the implementation of community-informed placemaking practices. The program works to invest and create public art experiences – both downtown and in neighborhoods – that illuminate residents' history, sparks reflection and dialogue, and enhances daily life.

To further help artists connect with opportunities, the City has also launched a [Durham Calls for Artists](#) page on its website, which lists a number of upcoming opportunities for artists in and around Durham. Artists and other stakeholders who would like to be notified of current and future art-related opportunities and news can now sign up for alerts through the [Cultural and Public Arts Calls for Art mailing list](#). For more information about the City's Cultural and Public Arts Program, visit the City's [cultural and public arts page](#).

PUBLIC ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In collaboration with the City of Durham's Public Works Department, the City of Durham's Cultural and Public Art Program is seeking an Artist or Artist Team with experience in projects centered around environmental design and functional, sculptural and integrated artwork to design and fabricate a series of public art installations at the new South Ellerbe Restoration project located at 808 West Trinity Avenue in Durham.

Throughout the community engagement sessions, the public's ideas emphasized installing water-themed public art and interpretive information along the trails and providing hands-on educational opportunities for adults and children. Topics for educational themes included the water cycle, stormwater, flooding, natural restoration processes, native plants, and wildlife habitat.

Selected artist(s) will continue to gather and synthesize community feedback and suggestions to design a sculptural, functional artwork installation or incorporate public art that is integrated into the site that speaks to the importance of environmental sustainability in Durham. The selected artist(s) should be comfortable with fabricating and installing public artworks during the construction design process.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The public art will be installed at the South Ellerbe Restoration project site, with specific locations determined by the selected artist and City staff collaboratively. The image below identifies the potential locations for the public artworks, including (1) handrails and/or (2) locations for public art amenities like shaded structures, benches, and/or site-specific integrated ground plane amenities and educational elements. The public art project will be located near the Durham SmART Initiative corridor; more information here: <https://www.smartdurham.org/new-page>.

South Ellerbe Restoration Project
808 West Trinity Avenue Durham, NC 27701



Figure 5: Potential locations above were gathered from two public surveys released in summer 2017 and April 2018 to gather input from residents about project goals, site amenities, and design elements for the overall project.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To reflect the community's voice in the public art component, the selected Candidate will plan and facilitate inclusive and accessible community engagement activities to encourage public input and participation as outlined in the "Scope of Work" section below. The selected Candidates will be expected to lead, host, facilitate, and participate in community and staff engagement activities before finalizing their designs to gather feedback from residents living in the respective City Council Wards, especially [Ward 1](#) where the South Ellerbe Restoration Project will be located.

The City of Durham may use virtual platforms that include SMS capabilities, geo-tagging, and surveys to assist the Candidates throughout the engagement process.

City of Durham Plans and Resources

The selected Candidates are encouraged to review existing City plans to develop and shape the community's involvement in the design and development of the public art project. The City of Durham Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap to make Durham a diverse, welcoming and innovative community, which highlights goals to Foster cohesive, engaged and diverse communities where residents have equitable access to community resources, and the opportunity for a high quality of life. More information can be found here: <https://durhamnc.gov/183/Envision---Strategic-Plan>

The City of Durham's Neighborhood Improvement Services have issued a draft Equitable Engagement Blueprint document to advance equitable community engagement by offering specific guidelines that can be adapted and replicated across City initiatives. More information can be found here:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/durhamnis/pages/592/attachments/original/1543332399/Draft_Equitable_Engagement_Blueprint_%2818%29_11.06.pdf?1543332399

Past Community Outreach Activities

Outreach and input from community members has been a vital part of this multi-year process.

On July 27, 2017, the Public Works Department's Stormwater & GIS Services Division hosted a Public Information Session at City Hall to gather input from 50+ residents and

other interested groups on the natural stormwater restoration proposed for the site. On August 14, 2017, a survey was distributed and 34 individuals submitted responses ranking project goal priorities and preferred community amenities. The five highest rated community amenities identified in the survey are access to nearby trails, educational signage, boardwalks, overlooks, and seating areas.

On September 27, 2017, the Public Works Department hosted a Design Workshop at Durham Arts Council, where over 50 members of the public, City Staff, Durham County Staff, and members of the design team came together to share their ideas and suggestions to improve the environment. Suggestions ranged from trails, boardwalks, recreation, and overlooks to amenities focused on supporting natural areas, vegetation, and wildlife habitat, and to interpretive signs along the trails providing educational opportunities and water-themed public art installations.

In October 2018, a focus group on Public Art & Education was identified to explore potential amenity designs and installations centered around three areas: “seating”, “discovery and exploration”, and “plaza”.

More information on all the community outreach activities can be found here:

<https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37047>

RFQ ELIGIBILITY

This RFQ is open to all residents of North Carolina, but preference will be given to residents of the County of Durham with connections to the Durham community and/or who are connected to and aware of the history of the area. The City encourages people from diverse backgrounds to apply. Candidates must be artists, designers, or fabricators or partnered with artists, designers, or fabricators, eligible to work in the United States, and age 18 and older. Candidates are eligible regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, gender identification, military status, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical ability.

RFQ SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions must be received by **Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST** via email to the project manager, Rebecca Brown (rebecca.brown@durhamnc.gov), with the subject line "Public Art RFQ: South Ellerbe Creek Restoration Project". The project manager will distribute all questions and answers to those respondents who have requested RFQ's from the City. No other City official or employee is empowered to speak for the City with respect to this RFQ.

If a Candidate(s) does not receive confirmation receipt from the City by Friday, October 8 at 3:00 PM EST, it is the responsibility of the Candidate(s) to contact the City to confirm submission by Monday, October 11 by 3:00 PM EST to be considered eligible.

The RFQ submissions shall include the following:

1. **Statement of Interest:** narrative outlining the Candidates' qualifications and interest in this project, including descriptions of past engagement work within the Durham community or other communities and/or interest in community engagement. Artists are encouraged to include information on how they may identify and engage residents and community contacts within Ward 1 and neighborhoods surrounding the restoration site.
2. **Work samples:** visual representations of past artwork that demonstrate the Candidates' qualifications for this project. In order to be considered for this project, the Candidate must submit at least five (5) images or documents of at least five (5) previously completed projects, with the option to submit up to ten (10) images or documents of no more than ten (10) previously completed

projects. Each sample should have an accompanying summary of the title, location, cost, materials/media, and date associated with the image(s) and/or project(s).

3. **References:** each Candidate team should provide at least three (3) current references (non-familial) or recommendation letters with contact information for each reference, who can speak to the Candidates' work ethic, skills and strengths.

(Preference for file formatting: PDF)

SELECTION PROCESS

1. The Review Committee will include staff from the City and may at the City's discretion include representatives from the City of Durham's General Services Department, Stormwater and GIS Department, and others.
2. The Review Committee will review submissions for completeness and may reject incomplete or non-responsive submissions.
3. The Review Committee will evaluate applications based on criteria that may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Aesthetic excellence of past projects.
 - b. Examples of past community engagement. Experience, success, and/or interest in community engagement in the process of creating public artwork.
 - c. Proven track record of using the materials and methods appropriate for this project.
 - d. Demonstrated ability to manage projects with similar budgets on time and on budget.
4. The Review Committee may invite up to five (5) Finalists to interview with the committee or committee members.
5. Finalists may be required to visit site location and interview in-person or online with the Review Committee (in compliance with all local, state, and federal guidelines regarding COVID-19).
6. After the interviews, the Review Committee will recommend the Candidates to the City, who will make the final determination as to which Candidates are selected.
7. The City and selected Candidates will enter into a written contract detailing mutual responsibilities and the full scope of work, including a project budget.

SCOPE OF WORK

The services and obligations that will be required from the Candidate during the contract period include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Leading, planning and facilitating an engagement process to solicit community input on public art with at least three (or more) community sessions prior to submission of design concept(s).
 - Sessions should include in-person or virtual community conversations, an online element (i.e. survey, community board, etc.) and at least one on-site event.
 - Additionally, artist should participate in at least two community engagement sessions hosted by Public Works (if applicable).
- Collaborating with the City on the final design.
- Will oversee the fabrication and installation of the public art piece(s).
- Submission of a reasonable maintenance plan to ensure proper conservation of the pieces.
- Completing project within agreed upon timeframe.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

- **September 3 – October 7, 2021:** RFQ promotion/informing
- **Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST:** RFQ Deadline
- **Friday, October 8:** Confirmation of RFQ Receipt via email from the City of Durham to Candidates
- **Monday, October 11 by 3:00 PM EST:** By this date if a Candidate(s) does not receive confirmation receipt from the City, it is the responsibility of the Candidate(s) to contact the City to confirm submission.
- **October 22, 2021:** City to notify Candidates of decision
- **October 29, 2021:** City and Candidates to enter into contract
- **Fall 2021 – Spring 2022:** Design Development and Stakeholders engagement
- **Fall 2021 – Spring 2022:** Final Designs shared with the Stakeholders
- **2022:** Candidates submit Final Designs to City for final approval
- **2022/2023:** Fabrications & Installation

BUDGET

The selected artist or artist team will have a total public art project budget of \$50,000, including artist fees, artist-design, community engagement, fabrication, and documentation of the artwork on site.

Discretion of the City

- A. The City of Durham reserves the right to reject any or all RFQs.
- B. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this document or in any addendums to this document, unless the contrary provision refers specifically to this provision, the City reserves the right (i) to negotiate changes of any nature with any candidate with respect to any term, condition, or provision in this document and/or in any RFQ application, whether or not something is stated to be mandatory and whether or not it is said that a RFQ application will be rejected if certain information or documentation is not submitted with it, and (ii) to enter into an agreement for some or all of the work with one or more persons, firms, or corporations that do not submit SOQs. For example, all deadlines are for the administrative convenience or needs of the City and may be waived by the City in its discretion. This subparagraph B applies to the entire RFQ.
- C. Where the City asks or tells candidates to do stated things, such as that a proposal and/or RFQ application should follow a stated format or that the candidate should do stated things in seeking the contract, the City may reject a proposal and/or RFQ application because it does not comply with those requests, so the candidate is adding to its risk of rejection by non-compliance. Still, the City may, in its discretion, waive non-compliance. This subsection (C) does not limit subsections (A) and (B).
- D. Once a contract is signed, the parties to the contract may enforce the contract according to its terms as allowed by applicable law